UNITED
NATIONS

DP

Governing Council
of the United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1992/SR.14
9 June 1992

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

GOVERNING COUNCIL

Thirty-ninth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 6 May 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. BREITENSTEIN (Finland)
later: Mr. SENILOLI (Fiji)

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GE.92-70440/4550B

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

OTHER MATTERS (agenda item 11)

(c) THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES AND EASTERN EUROPE: WAYS OF ESTABLISHING A UNITED NATIONS PRESENCE (DP/1992/51; DP/1992/CRP.6)

1. Mr. HELMKE (Director, Division for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States) said that the report of the Administrator and the conference room paper dealt with matters which had been raised at the special session of the Governing Council in February: the risks involved in diverting resources from the South to the East, the forms and content of UNDP cooperation, cost-effectiveness and costs of the presence of the Programme on the ground and the innovative management methods to be adopted in the particular situation. The question of the comparative advantages of UNDP had been examined in the document from the point of view both of the "slot" to be occupied by the Programme, its procedures and instruments and also of the complementarity of its action in relation to other donors in those countries. In the case of countries admitted to recipient status at the February session, the three priorities were to consolidate the transition towards a market economy and democracy, to lay the foundations for future development and to enhance the credibility of the reforms, both at the national and international levels, using the experience gained by UNDP in the area of human development. All the countries in transition had initially recorded a serious deterioration in their economies, with a consequent danger of social and political instability. They were accordingly expecting UNDP to support the economic measures taken by them, so as to avert those dangers. The Secretary-General's initiative in installing "interim offices" in six countries of the former Soviet Union had to be seen against that background.

2. The presence of the Programme on the ground was felt by those new UNDP partners to be more important than the actual allocation of indicative planning figures (IPFs). Furthermore, since UNDP actions in those countries did not fall within conventional development categories, the offices set up in them would concentrate on technical services rather than on administrative and representative functions. Technical advisory services and programme development would go hand in hand with the provision of specialist information and access to the international databases of United Nations agencies, in order to promote cooperation between those new countries and the countries of the South. The interim offices would also support the local information media.

3. The opening of field offices of the conventional type would cost between $60 and $80 million up to the end of the present budgetary period and regional coverage (one office for several countries) $40 million, whereas the implementation of the proposals in document DP/1992/51 had been costed at $8.25 million. The problem was therefore not so much one of the funds required as the type of presence necessary in those countries. Administrative support would not be provided directly by those offices, but by a regional services centre, while "business centres", comprising private enterprises, would provide UNDP and other agency missions with logistic support on a cost-reimbursable basis. There was therefore no question of setting up a common services structure, to be handled directly by UNDP. The effective

operation of the system would depend on a wide-area computer-based communication network, the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of which had already been studied.

4. As far as management methods were concerned, it was envisaged appointing to the UNDP offices staff members competent in specific aspects of economy transition who would be the first experts to be consulted and who would assist national counterparts with capacity building. The establishment of one or more trust funds was also envisaged, so as to permit separate accounting for what were de facto special cases. The most important decision to be taken was not whether UNDP would be present in all those countries or only in some, but for how long. In any case, urgent action was required, since the countries in question had already suffered greatly, their economies were deteriorating rapidly and humanitarian aid was not enough. Furthermore, the longer intervention was delayed, the higher the costs of economic recovery.

5. Mr. SOLEN (Observer for Turkey) said that his delegation favoured the possible establishment of a UNDP field structure in the eight newly independent countries of the former Soviet Union, which had recently been allocated IPFs. If, for various reasons, the physical presence of UNDP should prove impossible, a suitable arrangement might be to reinforce the Ankara office as a base for Programme activities in the countries in question. Turkey, which was in fact both a donor and a recipient country with experience and technical and administrative skills, had close historical, cultural and linguistic ties with a number of the newly independent republics. All those factors constituted comparative advantages in its favour.

6. Mr. SOUTTER (Canada) said that his Government had long been of the view that UNDP's administrative costs were too high and that the cost of many UNDP field offices was out of proportion to the value of programme delivery. At the special session in February, his delegation and many others had urged caution in regard to UNDP proposals for the immediate establishment of offices in five new countries. Two months later, it was proposed to establish offices in 15 new countries, again with the same urgent insistence.

7. His delegation strongly supported the principle of an integrated United Nations field presence, but the documents submitted left many questions unanswered. Whereas the Secretary-General was proposing to set up six country offices in the CIS, which might be acceptable, UNDP was proposing 15 such offices. What was the justification? What evidence did UNDP have that supplementary funds would be made available to support that initiative? His delegation was by no means convinced that it was so, since Canada itself had found it possible to deliver assistance effectively without intermediaries. On the issue of coordination, had UNDP discussed its role with the European Community, which was currently performing a coordinating function in the region, with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) or even with the proposed recipients? Until the sources of financing listed in paragraph 19 of document DP/1992/51 were specifically identified for each country and an appropriate cost-benefit review presented, his delegation saw no justification for considering anything beyond the Secretary-General's proposals. No one disputed the urgency of the problems facing CIS countries; but one had to be sure that the very rapid deployment of a field structure in each of those countries would substantially solve those problems.

8. Ms. SCHJERVEN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that those countries supported the approval of recipient status to Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan. The Nordic countries supported the democratization, the structural reforms and the transition of those countries on a bilateral basis in addition to development assistance budgets. Since the major part of UNDP resources for the fifth cycle was earmarked for countries with a per capita GDP of under $750, the Programme should put to the best advantage the limited resources available for that region. In regard to establishing a UNDP presence in the region, the proposal to set up 15 new offices appeared too ambitious and was not justified by sufficiently thorough studies. It was not clear why the proposal should be examined as a matter of urgency before country programmes had been formulated in cooperation with recipient Governments, programmes which would depend to a large extent on decisions as to the appropriate field representation? It was also necessary to work towards a common United Nations approach both to programming and field representation. Consultations with the ACC and JCGP were referred to in document DP/1992/51, but without any indication of their outcome. Concerning the Secretary-General's decision to establish, in cooperation with UNDP, "interim offices" in six countries in the region, it would be interesting to know UNDP's views on the practical implications of that initiative for a common field representation. The Nordic countries found it very surprising that the Secretary-General should have prejudged in that manner a decision by the Governing Council affecting UNDP's administrative resources.

9. UNDP had identified five different sources of funding outside the UNDP core budget. To what extent were those possibilities for financing realistic and how far could the costs of establishing integrated offices be shared with other United Nations organizations? The Nordic countries noted with satisfaction that UNDP emphasized cost-effectiveness and planned a minimum of international posts and logistic support for the offices. They found it difficult however to approve the Administrator's proposal on the basis of the information received prior to the session. The Council should not take a decision on a UNDP presence in the Baltic countries and in the Commonwealth of Independent States before the questions of UNDP's role and the comparative advantages of the Programme and the possibilities for a common United Nations approach and financing from other sources had been answered.

10. Mr. BLUKIS (Observer for Latvia), also speaking on behalf of Estonia and Lithuania, said that for historical reasons the Baltic countries were among the least experienced countries in international relations and in consequence urgently needed to establish multilateral and bilateral technical and financial aid flows and trade relations. It was necessary, in the first place, to collect, understand, evaluate and utilize the necessary information and to build the confidence of responsible government officials and private entrepreneurs. An effective and continuing UNDP presence could, by example and training help towards that end, since the labour force in the Baltic countries was highly skilled and would only need to be taught to put its skills to use in the context of a market economy.

11. The rapid provision of aid and the establishment of trade relations would render it possible to prevent the decay, if not the demise, of the very considerable human and institutional resources of the Baltic countries and

would rapidly free them from their dependence on foreign aid. The handling of international assistance and trade relations was a key element in the process of transition, and was a field in which UNDP enjoyed particular comparative advantages. The Baltic countries were also anxious to cooperate with UNDP in various other fields where the Programme's world network and its know-how could rapidly achieve appreciable effects on the transition of those countries to democracy and a market economy.

12. Mr. SHOJI (Japan) pointed out that the countries of the former Soviet Union were not all at the same stage of development. In the five Central Asian republics, per capita income and the economic infrastructure were at a level similar to those in low- and middle-income developing countries. Those countries should be given the same treatment, in accordance with the proposal which his country had submitted to the OECD Development Assistance Committee. In the republics in the European region, on the other hand, the level of development was higher and the support accorded to those countries should be temporary, to help them through the transitional period. Those differences should be taken into account when determining the best possible UNDP presence in the countries in question. The innovative and cost-effective approach proposed by the Administrator was certainly commendable, in particular the application of the "business centre" concept and that of an integrated United Nations presence, but the other agencies were insufficiently committed to that approach. The whole question should be examined, in particular, in the ACC and JCPG.

13. The cost over 18 months of the structure proposed by the Administrator ($8.25 million) was very substantial in relation to the aggregate amount of IPFs allocated to those countries for the fifth cycle. Furthermore, since only one international staff member was to be employed in each case, there was a risk that those offices might be not only costly but ineffective. Another and more realistic solution would be to establish only a small number of offices adequately staffed to cover several countries, especially since the six sources of funding, listed in paragraph 19 of the Administrator's report, were still hypothetical. The Secretary-General intended to establish offices in six countries in the region fairly soon, without it being immediately clear that the choice had been guided by the development needs of each country and the scope of UNDP technical assistance. His delegation believed that a cautious step-by-step approach should be adopted, responding to the actual formulation and implementation of programmes and projects.

14. Mr. LENZI (Italy) said that it was necessary to determine precisely what UNDP's specific advantages were, in relation to other forms of cooperation that were already under way or being considered, in particular through European institutions, so that donor countries could decide what additional resources should be allocated to the United Nations system. Apart from emergency humanitarian aid, the essential purpose of cooperation with the CIS countries and the Baltic States was to stimulate underemployed energies and resources while at the same time promoting pluralism, participation and convergence of aims, an approach which was different from the traditional conception of development assistance.

15. As those countries made the transition to a market economy, UNDP could be most useful in an advisory capacity, in the administrative and managerial fields, with special regard to institution building, budgeting, prior assessment of projects, training of administrative staff and dissemination of information. The changing requirements of each of the countries should therefore be closely monitored as its reforms and economic rehabilitation projects progressed. As regards the possibility of establishing permanent United Nations offices, it would seem that the countries in question needed experts rather than resident representatives. In addition to the establishment of a separate UNDP division for Europe, a centralized inter-agency office in Geneva could ensure system-wide operational coherence and would be in a position to intervene as required. The situation called for innovative approaches by the whole system, and perhaps at the next session of the Governing Council it would be possible to establish a more structured United Nations presence.

16. Ms. DOWSETT (New Zealand) said that the question at issue was a twofold one: what role could UNDP play in the CIS countries? Should it establish a presence there and, if so, how?

17. There could be no doubt that all the countries in the CIS needed aid, in one form or another, and the Russian Federation perhaps most of all. But it was not certain that the most useful aid would come from UNDP, which had much the same advantages to offer as the World Bank, for example, which had already been given a mandate to assist the CIS. Further thought should therefore be given to the various types of aid envisaged by the Administrator, and in particular to the question of what "South-East cooperation" might cover. UNDP could also exploit the experience it had gained in Eastern Europe and propose certain novel forms of cooperation which had already proved their worth; some were listed in paragraph 31 of conference room paper DP/1992/CRP.6. Cooperation between donors and recipients was also essential, but UNDP must be careful that it did not play the same role as other donors. All in all, the Administrator's proposals needed to be spelt out more carefully, particularly since the budgetary information provided on the possible establishment of temporary integrated offices did not seem to be consistent. All things considered, her delegation would wait for more detailed proposals before taking a position.

18. Mr. BROLIWERS (Netherlands) noted that UNDP seemed to be ready to undertake certain activities in the Republics of the former USSR forthwith, but that the description of the kinds of assistance envisaged (DP/1992/51, para. 6) remained rather vague. Furthermore, despite the requests made in June 1991 and in February 1992 at the Council's special session, UNDP was still not providing the Council with updated macroeconomic figures on which it could base a decision. It remained unclear how UNDP representation at the local level would fit in with that of the other organizations already present and increasingly active in the region, such as the World Bank, EBRD and the European Community.

19. Although the allocation requested by the Administrator was a modest one, his delegation could not support the proposals, essentially for two reasons: in principle, the Netherlands Government was against using funds allocated for

official development aid to solve problems in countries which were not developing countries. It was clear that in the present case ODA money would be used for non-ODA purposes. It was even possible that some at least of the 15 States in question would not meet the assistance criteria of the countries members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee. The proposal confirmed the fears of many members of the Council that UNDP was shifting its focus from the South to the East, both financially and in the content of its programmes.

20. The report in document DP/1992/51 also raised some questions of a financial nature: why was the Administrator proposing to finance the whole amount of $8.25 million out of the administrative budget, when in paragraph 19 five other financial options were mentioned? It was unlikely that Governments would provide the extra resources, and he would therefore like to know whether UNDP's core budget could cover those costs. What, moreover, could justify the establishment of 15 separate offices, when sharing premises would not only make for greater efficiency but also improve coordination of the activities of all the United Nations bodies present?

21. It remained true that the study undertaken on the possibility of making more efficient use of the administrative capacities of field offices through the establishment of one or two regional administrative centres could be useful and that the formula could be extended to other regions, provided that the Council knew exactly what savings would be achieved through the establishment of such centres.

22. Mr. WEJTKO (Poland) reminded the Council that Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia aspired to become full members of the European Community, with which they had already concluded association agreements, so that it was only on a temporary basis that they were seeking UNDP assistance and other forms of bilateral and multilateral aid. It was nevertheless true that the actual presence of UNDP in those countries was of crucial importance from the point of view of effective use of the very limited resources provided by the Programme. It was, for example, through the presence of a Resident Representative in Warsaw and through the close day-to-day working relations established that it had been possible to ensure that the programme for Poland took full account of national priorities and in October 1990 to launch an umbrella project combining various quite new forms of assistance, which was already showing very positive results. In addition, the UNDP presence made for better coordination of fund-raising from bilateral and multilateral donors represented in Warsaw.

23. As a general rule, the smooth cooperation thus established with local UNDP representatives was based on established mechanisms, particularly as regards cost-sharing. For the fifth cycle, Poland intended to pay UNDP the equivalent of US$ 3 million in Polish currency, as compared with its IPF of $3.5 million. It would be ready to organize a seminar or workshop in Warsaw in order to explain to the new recipient countries what sort of cooperation they could expect with a local UNDP presence.

24. Ms. SCHAFER-PREUSS (Germany) said that her delegation was quite willing that the Russian Federation should be given recipient status while already having that of a net contributor, because the arrangement would be purely transitional in nature and would come to an end as soon as the country was again able to fulfil all its duties as a net contributor.

25. With regard to the establishment of a UNDP presence in the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States, conference room paper DP/1992/CRP.6 gave a useful indication of what the Administrator envisaged. However, at the Council's special session in February 1992, her delegation had asked UNDP, whose administrative budget was very tight, to consider other scenarios for the three Baltic States and the Republics of the former USSR which had asked for recipient status, in particular through the establishment of regional offices and/or the opening of joint offices, especially in the smaller countries. Her delegation was therefore disappointed to find that conference room paper DP/1992/CRP.6 did not throw much light on such institutional and organizational aspects.

26. However, Germany was not in principle opposed to the general approach adopted by the Administrator. Given that in the present case UNDP cooperation had to depart from traditional forms of assistance, that its presence would merely be temporary and that the Secretary-General intended to establish six United Nations offices in the CIS countries, UNDP should enter into negotiations with the United Nations Secretariat and the other organs of the system, and also with the donors and the countries concerned, in order to identify the countries in which there was the most urgent need for a UNDP presence. That presence would have the structure recommended by the Administrator, on condition, however, that the approach was a joint one and that UNDP did not act in isolation. For the time being, her delegation did not think it would be appropriate to set up a UNDP office in each of the new recipient countries. Her delegation could not as things stood support the Administrator's budgetary proposals, but hoped to discuss the matter further in the Budgetary and Finance Committee.

27. Mr. ELLIS (United Kingdom) said that his delegation was not yet able to take a decision on the Administrator's proposals. However, it urged UNDP to be realistic, for there was no guarantee that the resources mentioned in the Administrator's report would be made available. Perhaps UNDP should coordinate the activities envisaged for the CIS countries with the World Bank and other organizations which had already established a presence in the region.

28. Moreover, the CIS States were not all alike, and it would not be advisable to open 15 new offices until their individual and varying requirements had been defined. His delegation would have difficulty in supporting a blanket proposal, which did not take the specific needs of each country into account. The Council should review the field office concept and draw on the experience gained in Central and Eastern Europe. The United Kingdom was firmly committed to the principles laid down in Governing Council decision 90/34 as well as the thematic activities identified in it.

29. Mr. AFANASIEV (Russian Federation) said that his Government, which was moving towards a market economy and had introduced radical economic reforms with a view to joining the world economy, was anxious to maintain relations with the international economic organizations, including UNDP. Some days earlier, the Russian Federation had joined the International Monetary Fund. Its participation in UNDP was of much longer standing, dating from the Programme's very inception. As the successor State to the USSR vis-à-vis the international organizations, the Russian Federation could claim that it had always been an active member of the Governing Council. It therefore supported the requests for recipient status from the republics of the former USSR, and hoped that the members of the Council would assent to that request. At its special session in February 1992, the Council had upheld the principles of universality and democracy by granting recipient status to the three Baltic States, the Ukraine and Belarus. His delegation wished to stress that the recipient status of those countries and the Russian Federation itself was merely a temporary arrangement in order to see them through current difficulties. Nevertheless, as a recipient country, Russia intended to continue providing technical assistance to other countries, in particular through voluntary contributions to UNDP. Furthermore, the Russian Federation would not press for a modification of the IPFs allocated to the CIS countries for the fifth programming cycle. It intended to pursue the action under way and extend "South-East cooperation", by drawing on the experience gained particularly with regard to privatization and creation of enterprises.

30. Above all, the Russian Federation was looking to UNDP for assistance by independent experts, in the form of advisory services, for example, to train staff in various sectors, including banking.

31. Mr. MARDOVITCH (Observer for Belarus) said that his country was also moving towards a market economy and had to establish all the structures required by a new independent State. Within just 18 months, its Parliament would have adopted 119 new laws, including some basic texts concerning the right to own private property, land, creation of enterprises, and so on. The situation in the country had deteriorated seriously, the process of transformation having thrown all mechanisms into disorder. In such circumstances, it even became difficult to safeguard rigorous respect for human rights. The granting of recipient status to Belarus should greatly facilitate its transition to a market economy.

32. The Administrator's report (DP/1992/51) contained a number of interesting and innovative proposals which set the tone for cooperation between the new recipient countries and UNDP. He was certain that, in time, the details of the mechanisms envisaged could gradually be improved. Belarus sincerely hoped that it would be possible to establish a UNDP field office in Minsk. It also supported the recent requests for recipient country status from other republics of the former USSR.

33. Mr. MOORE (United States of America) said that at the present time of United Nations system-wide reform, the assistance provided to recipient countries undergoing a period of economic reform must be well coordinated, with UNDP playing its role as coordinator of United Nations system technical assistance worldwide. His delegation considered that the Programme should not be a major source of funding for the CIS, its role being to provide technical

expertise. Nor should the assistance to the Baltic States and the CIS divert resources from the poorer countries; the resource allocations for new countries should be consistent with the principles of the Council's 1990 decision establishing the 1992-1996 funding levels.

34. In that regard, the United States was extremely concerned that the Council's decision of February 1992, requesting the Administrator to consult with other agencies of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy so as to secure their commitment to the establishment of joint administrative structures, had not been fulfilled. The UNDP should initiate further consultations on the matter.

35. At that juncture, his delegation could not support the trust fund concept and considered that the Administrator should provide a more detailed description of the activities which would be financed from the fund. It was difficult to give such a mechanism serious consideration without knowing how it would fit in with plans being developed by the World Bank, EBRD and other multilateral and bilateral donors, or indeed how those activities would relate to UNDP's other programmes around the world.

36. Mr. OZADOVSKI (Observer for the Ukraine) underlined the importance of the question at issue, in view of the difficulties which the countries of CIS were experiencing in their process of social and economic transformation. He welcomed UNDP's work in that connection, including the Administrator's report (DP/1992/51) and the recent joint UNDP/United Nations mission to Kiev. During the mission, talks had been held with high-ranking Ukrainian officials with a view to consider establishing a joint representation of the agencies concerned. It had provided an opportunity to examine there and then various ways of improving the practical aspects of cooperation between the Ukraine, UNDP and other United Nations agencies.

37. Mrs. WYRSCH (Switzerland), while agreeing that the new republics which had emerged from the former Soviet Union should be granted recipient status, stressed that UNDP's principle of universality of action should not be called into question. If the international community was keen for the Programme to work effectively, recent efforts to focus action on the least developed countries should not be overlooked.

38. Nevertheless, UNDP must be ready to respond to new requirements and offer its services in so far as it was better placed to undertake certain duties. In doing so, the risk of duplication as well as the necessary complementarity in respect of action already under way in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the CIS must be considered. UNDP was considering an innovative approach for the new recipient countries undergoing economic transition so as to cope with what were, by and large, unprecedented requirements. However, some aspects required clarification: the integrated approach envisaged by the United Nations agencies; the definition of UNDP's role and in particular the international experts who might be posted to the 15 republics emerging from the former USSR; the uncertainty surrounding the extra-budgetary funding required; the idea of setting up one or two administrative centres as well as a "business centre". In view of the urgency of the requirements, rather than making any new arrangements, it would be advisable to try to make use of existing United Nations structures in the vicinity of the region.

39. Mrs. MOYA-GOTSCH (Austria), supported, as other delegations had already done, the granting of recipient status to the newly independent republics of the former USSR. It was clear from the earlier discussion, that there were some reservations about the idea of setting up 15 national micro-offices. Those reservations were centred on the necessity for efficiency, the imprecise description of UNDP's actual activities, the duties that a senior international staff member could reasonably accomplish on his own and the problem of funding. Nonetheless, it would seem that compromises could be reached, and that the different issues could be settled satisfactorily.

40. Her delegation appreciated UNDP's wish to participate in the current processes of transition and to assist the Governments concerned in tackling their most urgent challenges. If, like Poland, the countries in question truly wished to cooperate with UNDP, and were willing to provide structures and share in the costs, there was no reason why the Council should not seriously consider a UNDP presence organized in conjunction with other United Nations agencies. Austria considered that a consensus decision should be taken on the matter, if possible during the current session and hoped that all member States, including the traditional major recipients of UNDP assistance, would participate in the negotiating process in an open and flexible manner.

41. Mrs. KEPPENS (Belgium) recalled the reservations expressed by her delegation during the Council's special session in February 1992 regarding the concept of bilateral official development aid to the countries of Eastern Europe, pointing out that any such proposal should be considered in the context of a broader discussion of the status of developing countries. Belgium did not object to multilateral support for Eastern European countries, provided that it would benefit the poorest among them, and that the type of assistance envisaged would be tailored to suit their particular situation.

42. With regard to the establishment of a United Nations presence, her delegation did not consider it appropriate to set up an office in each of the Eastern European countries since several regional bureaux would suffice. It suggested that UNDP should report to the Governing Council at its next session on the experience gained regarding cooperation with Eastern European countries.

43. Mr. ALOM (Observer for Bangladesh) said that his country attached special importance to the inclusion of the new CIS in the United Nations system. In view of UNDP's neutral, universal, advisory and catalytic role, Bangladesh favoured a UNDP presence, in order to assist the new independent States in establishing a new mode of economic development and in ensuring their democratization. Activities of that kind would mean that UNDP resources would need to be augmented, through increased voluntary contributions, particularly from the more developed partners in development cooperation.

44. If it was considered essential for programme implementation and management to set up a field office in each recipient country, instead of a regional bureau, the countries concerned might contribute directly to local office costs pending the establishment of a sustainable programme mechanism.

45. Mr. BORISSOV (Bulgaria), referring to the unprecedented changes taking place in Central and Eastern Europe, stressed that the newly independent States of the former USSR clearly faced major difficulties. Recognizing the need for efficiency, his delegation supported UNDP's efforts to do its best to satisfy the needs of those countries, in the light of the requests made to it. However, that should not result in the South being neglected in favour of the East, but rather in setting as the objective a certain complementarity.

46. Mr. LONG Yongntu (China) welcomed the fact that the CIS and Baltic States had recently acquired recipient country status. With regard to the establishment of a UNDP presence in those countries, China considered that, since substance outweighed form, it was more important that those countries should themselves participate as soon as possible in UNDP programmes. The Russian Federation had recently participated in a regional cooperation programme with some north-east Asian countries, including China. That cooperation had been organized without a UNDP presence in the Russian Federation, and even before the latter had become a recipient country.

47. His delegation therefore thought, as other delegations thought, that UNDP should prepare a programme in due form for the countries concerned, which would take account of their most pressing needs and their actual situation. Only then would it be possible to consider a presence which would render the UNDP's assistance more effective.

48. Mr. MATSVAYI (Zimbabwe) said that his delegation had no objection to the assistance envisaged for Eastern European countries. All the same, it should not result in resources being diverted from the African continent. All were aware that several African countries had also embarked on large-scale programmes of economic reform. More than ever before Africa needed resources and additional assistance in order to carry through its processes of structural adjustment.

49. Mr. HELMKE (Director, Division for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States) observed first of all that, under the arrangements envisaged, administrative expenses would be funded differently from the traditional field offices. Furthermore, the greater part of the costs of the regional administrative service centre would no doubt be borne by the United Nations, and the most convenient solution would certainly be to establish it in Vienna. As for the expenses incurred in the countries themselves, the private sector would probably be in the best position to make a contribution, and training activities were planned for company directors. The remaining expenses, which were likely to be minimal, would be met by self-financing.

50. As several delegations had already remarked, there were major differences among the countries emerging from the former Soviet Union. For that reason, rather than setting up administrative offices in each country, it had been planned to ensure a presence for the supply of services at cost price, as necessary. That was why, in some cases, a regional structure had not been deemed viable, at least for the time being. He pointed out that the initial sum anticipated would not be used for country programmes as such, but, as in the case of Poland, was intended to prepare the ground for subsequent activities.

51. Furthermore, a number of countries had indicated their interest in establishing new forms of cooperation with UNDP, forthwith, or in the near future, as net contributors. The missions to those countries had shown that they were ready and able to cooperate effectively in various fields with the developing countries and UNDP members of "South-East cooperation" in effect looked very promising.

52. Norway's suggestion to take country programmes as a starting point hardly seemed applicable. Given the situation of the countries in question, it would be necessary to examine the work done so far and assess requirements before preparing any country programme in a specific field.

53. He stressed the important role the specialized agencies could play in their respective field of competence, being in possession of international information and knowledge those countries so badly needed, and which should be transmitted to them as soon as possible, prior to the technical assistance provided by the different organizations in the United Nations system.

54. Enhancing management capacities and the coordination of external aid was an important aspect. At present, the bulk of the coordination work was done by financial backers and recipient countries had a long way to go before they could match those capacities.

55. As regards the modest resources which would have to be provided from the administrative budget, they would be used to cover the start-up costs, and not to finance the running of the offices.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ASSISTANCE (agenda item 4)

(a) UNDP PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO ADDRESS AND MITIGATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ACCIDENT AT THE CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

56. Mr. HELMKE (Director, Division for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States), on behalf of the Administrator, reported that, in line with several General Assembly resolutions, the United Nations and its various bodies and specialized agencies, including UNDP, were seeking ways of mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster in Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian Federation. A Chernobyl Pledging Conference had been held at United Nations headquarters in New York, in September 1991, but had produced only meagre results: $1.2 million compared to $650 million being raised for the Chernobyl Trust Fund. The timing had probably not been right, for the disaster had occurred five and a half years earlier, and, in September 1991, the idea of providing assistance for the Soviet Union had perhaps not yet gained acceptance. Above all, the Conference had taken place just one month following the abortive coup which had preceded the disintegration of the Soviet Union. By September 1991, several republics had already declared their independence and the future of the Soviet State very much in question. The United Nations had created a Chernobyl secretariat to stimulate and coordinate international aid. In view of the magnitude of the needs of the countries affected and the meagre contributions pledged, the secretariat was endeavouring, above all, to raise awareness on the subject and collect more

resources, not only from Governments but also from non-governmental organizations and the private sector. It was extremely difficult for the disaster-stricken countries to overcome the difficulties confronting them alone, and without assistance from the international community.

57. The UNDP had been informed that the United Nations approved the idea of establishing IPFs for the States in question, not because those modest sums would do much to mitigate the disaster's consequences, but because it would then be possible to assist the countries by providing coordination, management and information services. The proposal to establish Joint Interim UN/UNDP Offices in two of the republics would, if adopted, considerably facilitate access to the wide range of expertise and services available from the United Nations system. The sums which UNDP and recipient States would be asked to contribute were minimal. However, the existence of a UN/UNDP presence would improve the coordination of activities undertaken with the authorities, facilitate the flow of information and make it easier to attract and coordinate assistance from multilateral and bilateral sources as well as the private sector.

58. Mr. SENILOLI (Fiji) took the Chair.

59. Ms. POLLACK (United States of America) said that her country would be wary of any request for contribution to a relief fund under General Assembly resolution 45/190. It had co-sponsored the resolution on the understanding that its application would take full account of the conclusions of the international assessment carried out with the support of the IAEA. One of the conclusions was that the direct consequences of radiation on the health of the people still living in the areas which had been contaminated in 1990 were not substantial, and that the Soviet intervention had been entirely satisfactory. The United States maintained its view that bilateral programmes were the best way of providing assistance.

60. Mr. HELMKE (Director, Division for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States), responding to the United States delegation, recalled that UNDP had cooperated closely with the IAEA on the whole project. Furthermore, the international assessment in question had failed to take into account one part of the population affected, namely the 700,000 "clean up workers" involved in the decontamination operation.

61. The Governing Council took note of the report of the Administrator on the question.

(a) THE ROLE OF UNDP IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS NEW AGENDA FOR AFRICA IN THE 1990s (DP/1992/17)

62. Mr. DRAPER (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme) introduced Mrs. Johnson, new Assistant-Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa, to the Governing Council.

63. Mr. KHADER (Deputy Assistant-Administrator and Officer-in-Charge of the Regional Office for Africa) said that he feared that unless there was a concerted, national, bilateral and multilateral effort to help Africa find a way out of its increasing marginalization, it would be hard to talk about development for some of the countries in that continent. For, with the unprecedented drought in southern Africa and the rapid spread of the AIDS pandemic, the survival of millions of Africans was at stake.

64. The UNDP had discussed those problems in 1991 with the African Governments at four Cluster Meetings and one Regional Meeting, coinciding with the General Assembly review of the Action Programme for 1986-1990 and the New Agenda for the 1990s. The latter which should rectify the shortcomings of the previous programme, was meant to be a pact between the African countries and the international community to tackle Africa's huge development problems over a 10-year period. The aim was to achieve an average annual growth rate of 6 per cent within the decade, which required an estimated ODA of US$ 30 billion per annum.

65. Within the United Nations system, the Department of Economic and Social Development had been entrusted with coordinating support for the Agenda. Meanwhile, UNDP, which allocated around 50 per cent of its IPF resources to African countries, was working on including the priorities of the New Agenda in country and intercountry programmes for Africa. For instance, under the Programme for the Africa Region, UNDP was assisting OAU and the Economic Commission for Africa in setting up the African Economic Community, created in April 1991. Since the Community had to be built around existing subregional economic groups, it had been decided to enhance the technical and administrative capacities of some of them.

66. Apart from the Bureau's regular programmes, earlier that year the Administrator had launched two initiatives in support of the New Agenda for Africa, which were to be funded from the Special Programme Resources: namely, National Long-Term Perspective Studies and the African Capacity-Building Initiative. The Council would be kept informed of their implementation.

67. With the emergence of pluralism in many African countries, the UNDP resident representatives were increasingly being called upon to provide assistance in a new and essential area, namely, public affairs and the democratization process. They were accomplishing outstanding work, and a working party had been set up within the Regional Bureau to assist them. The Governing Council might wish to discuss the type and form of assistance the UNDP could provide in that area.

68. Mr. ABDALLAH (Department of Economic and Social Development) welcomed the process of restructuring which had taken place in the United Nations system, which, by promoting new forms of cooperation between the various bodies in the system, augured well for development cooperation.

69. Like UNDP, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development, and in particular the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, was doing its utmost to help Africa overcome the economic crisis. The Department had been instructed to

coordinate the system-wide implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa, adopted by the General Assembly in December 1991 as a follow-up to the previous recovery programme which had failed to halt the crisis. The New Agenda was narrower in scope, and was to last twice as long as the previous programme. It included a follow-up and evaluation mechanism, with precise deadlines; the first deadline had been fixed for the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. Africa attached considerable importance to the New Agenda and hoped that it would attract the necessary support and resources. The Department of Economic and Social Development was counting on UNDP's assistance to ensure the successful implementation of the Agenda. Contacts had already been made with UNDP officials and he hoped that the Governing Council would speed up the process.

70. The global shift in alliances and priorities was making Africans more aware that they had to mobilize their own resources for development. However, the new international economic order was hardly likely to bring any relief to their dramatic debt situation, which had serious consequences worldwide. Moreover, the structural adjustment measures being implemented were not facilitating their progress towards political and economic pluralism. Appropriate political, administrative and financial institutions should therefore be established to address those issues.

71. Japan's proposal to host an African summit in Tokyo in 1993 was very encouraging, and the United Nations would remain at the disposal of the Japanese Government in that regard. At a time when Africa seemed marginalized, it was essential that the United Nations should double its efforts to mobilize world public opinion in favour of Africa. The United Nations system and above all UNDP must continue to increase the efficiency of their assistance to the African continent.

72. Mr. FERRERIRA MARQUES (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Economic Community, said that it gave priority in its cooperation programmes to the African countries, especially to the poorest among them. The Community allocated 0.13 per cent of its GNP to the least developed countries. It hoped to increase that figure to 0.15 per cent by the year 2000, while supporting the democratization process under way on the African continent.

73. The Community therefore attached great importance to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa. It endorsed the analysis given in the Administrator's report (DP/1992/17) and, in view of the commitments of African countries, approved the deployment of UNDP efforts towards the three main areas indicated. It supported the proposal to use part of the funds from the Special Programme Resources in order to assist the African countries in formulating long-term perspective studies; however, it had doubts as to the usefulness of the African Capacity-Building Initiative, which ran the risk of not taking adequate account of the cultural differences within the continent. With regard to the Structural Adjustment Advisory Teams in Africa, underlining the link between the activities of those teams and the decision taken at the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to focus greater attention on restructuring policies in developing countries, he emphasized the need for close cooperation between UNDP and UNCTAD in that area.

74. Mr. MATSVAYI (Zimbabwe) agreed that for a number of reasons, some of which were beyond the African Government's control, the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development had not produced the desired results. Under the New Agenda more resources should be channelled to Africa which, by strengthening existing infrastructures and national capacities, would ensure the success of the reforms undertaken and assist the country in dealing with the consequences of the drought. The United Nations system had a major role to play in the implementation of those reforms, especially in developing management capacities and human resources.

75. His delegation considered that the "national execution" method should only be used in certain circumstances as the most appropriate means of achieving objectives. In conclusion, he pointed out that the implementation of structural adjustment programmes and economic reforms in African countries created social problems thereby obliging the Governments to take steps to tone down the programmes.

76. Mr. DORANI (Djibouti) thanked UNDP for the support it intended to provide to the New Agenda for the development of Africa. He hoped that the support would be part of an overall approach which took account of other aspects over and above the development crisis facing the African continent as well as the specific problems of each country, including the additional burden for some countries of the presence of a large number of refugees and displaced persons on their territory. Since those countries were hindered in their efforts to mobilize resources which might otherwise be used for health, employment, education and so on, he wondered whether such a parameter might be included in the assessment of human development scheduled for 1992.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.